

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8729

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 16539

LIMDIS

LONDON FOR MR WEISS

VIENNA FOR MBFR DEL

USNMR SHAPE FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO, GW

SUBJECT: MBFR CONVERSATION BETWEEN PM DIRECTOR WEISS

AND DISARMAMENT COMMISSIONER ROTH

REF: (A) BONN 15782; (B) BONN 16387

SUMMARY: DURING NOVEMBER 13 VISIT TO BONN BY PM
DIRECTOR WEISS, DISARMAMENT COMMISSIONER ROTH DESCRIBED
KEY DANGERS IN SOVIET MBFR PROPOSAL, EMPHASIZED THAT
COMMON CEILING CONCEPT IS ESSENTIAL ELEMENT TO KEEP

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ALLIANCE TOGETHER AND ATTAIN WESTERN MBFR OBJECTIVES,

TERMED NUCLEAR COMPONENT PRINCIPAL ALLIED INSTRUMENT IN ACHIEVING ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT, UNDERSCORED CONCERN ON CURRENT STATE OF THE BUNDESWEHR AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT TIME PRESSURES WOULD NOT EVENTUALLY ERODE WESTERN NEGOTIATING POSITION IN VIENNA. DIFFERING DEFENSE MINISTRY VIEWS ON MBFR/BUNDESWEHR FORCE STRUCTURE CONNECTION, AS VOICED TO WEISS BY WIECK, ARE BEING TREATED BY SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

1. SOVIET PROPOSAL

AMBASSADOR ROTH COMMENCED DISCUSSION WITH WEISS BY REFERRING TO THE FOUR PRINCIPAL DANGERS FOREIGN OFFICE PERCEIVED IN SOVIET MBFR PROPOSAL TABLED BY USSR IN VIENNA. THESE WERE: (A) VAGUE AND UNDEFINED CHARACTER OF SYMBOLIC TWENTY THOUSAND MAN CUTS ON BOTH SIDES; (B) INCLUSION OF AIR FORCE AND NUCLEAR ELEMENTS; (C) SOVIET CONCEPTUAL APPROACH WHICH APPEARS TO BE FUNDAMENTALLY CONTRARY TO WESTERN COMMON CEILING CONCEPT; AND (D) PROVISION THAT PARTICIPANTS COULD NOT TAKE ACTIONS THAT WOULD IN EFFECT CIRCUMVENT AGREEMENT--ROTH SAID THIS VAGUE NON-CIRCUMVENTION TYPE PROVISION WAS DESIGNED TO HINDER FUTURE WEST EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION. ROTH SAID HE THOUGHT THE SOVIET PROPOSAL HAD BEEN A VERY CLEVER ONE WHICH SOUGHT TO DIVIDE ALLIES AND PLAY UPON WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION; HE SEEMED TO ASSUME SOVIETS WOULD GO PUBLIC WITH THEIR PROPOSAL. ROTH SAID THE WEST SHOULD REACT BY EXPEDITING TIMETABLE FOR WESTERN FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL BUT ALSO BY ADHERING TO DEVELOPED NATO POSITION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT SOVIETS WOULD BE PROBING TO SEE WHICH WERE THE SOFT FEATURES OF ALLIED POSITION, WHICH MIGHT BE JETTISONED IN THE FUTURE.

2. ARMS CONTROL ZONE

WEISS ASKED ROTH FOR FURTHER ELABORATION ON SPECIFIC WAYS IN WHICH SOVIETS MIGHT SEEK TO INTERFERE WITH FURTHER WEST EUROPEAN DEFENSE EFFORTS. IN REPLY, ROTH NOTED THAT NGA INCLUDED ONLY THREE SMALL BENELUX COUNTRIES BESIDES FEDERAL GERMANY ON THE WESTERN SIDE. HE VOICED CONCERN THAT THIS "SMALL AREA--FOUR OF THE NINE EC MEMBER STATES"--COULD IN SOME WAY BE

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PLACED IN A POLITICAL STATUS DIFFERENT THAN THAT OF OTHER EC MEMBER STATES, THEREBY CREATING AN OBSTACLE TO EVENTUAL EUROPEAN UNION IN POLITICAL AND DEFENSE FIELDS. ROTH SAID THIS PROBLEM WOULD APPEAR LESS ACUTE IF FRANCE WERE A DIRECT MBFR PARTICIPANT; BUT THAT IS NOT THE CASE. ROTH SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED, AS WERE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION LEADERS IN GERMANY, THAT SOVIETS NOT OBTAIN COLOR OF LAW TO INTERFERE VIA

INSTRUMENTS OF VERIFICATION OR VAGUE NON-CIRCUMVENTION
WITH WESTERN DEFENSE EFFORTS. HE
SAID FOR THESE REASONS, HE
HAD ALWAYS BEEN VERY LEERY ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF LOCAL
INSPECTION BY SOVIET TEAMS PURSUANT TO AN MBFR AGREEMENT.
WEISS ASKED WHETHER THESE FRG CONCERNS WOULD OBTAIN EVEN
IF EASTERN SIDE WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO FULLY RECIPROCAL

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MEASURES OF INSPECTION AND/OR NON-CIRCUMVENTION. ROTH
SAID HE WOULD NOT OPPOSE SUCH PROVISIONS PREMATURELY OR
IN PRINCIPLE, BUT WOULD HAVE TO EXAMINE CONCRETE PROPO-
SALS WITH GREAT CARE. COMMENT: ROTH WAS DOING HIS
BEST TO BE REASONABLE BUT THE GERMANS FEELING VERY GREAT
PRESSURE FROM EUROPEAN ALLIES AND CDU TO AVOID ANY
MEASURE THAT COULD PROVIDE BASIS FOR SUBSEQUENT INTERNAL
POLITICAL OR EUROPEAN ALLIED ATTACK ON ARMS CONTROL ZONE
PROBLEM.

3. COMMON CEILING

ROTH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MBFR NEGOTIATION INEVITABLY WOULD ENTAIL CERTAIN DEGREE OF GIVE AND TAKE ON BOTH SIDES. HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ONE "BINDING ELEMENT" OF WESTERN POSITION MUST BE COMMON CEILING CONCEPT, WHICH WAS ESSENTIAL IN MAINTAINING ALLIED COHESION DURING NEGOTIATIONS AND IF THE WEST WAS TO ATTAIN ITS KEY MBFR OBJECTIVES. GAINING SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF COMMON CEILING
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OBJECTIVES WOULD CLEARLY BE A DIFFICULT TASK BUT GIVEN DIVERGENT ALLIED VIEWS, INCLUDING THOSE ON STATIONED/INDIGENOUS REDUCTION ISSUE, COMMON CEILING CONCEPT IS ESSENTIAL FRAMEWORK.

5. NUCLEAR ASPECT

IF COMMON CEILING IS ESSENTIAL GOAL, ROTH SAID WESTERN NUCLEAR COMPONENT IN MBFR NEGOTIATIONS IS THE KEY INSTRUMENT TO INDUCE SOVIET AGREEMENT. ROTH SAID HE SAW NO OTHER WAY TO WIN SOVIET AGREEMENT TO THE TYPE OF ASYMMETRICAL OBJECTIVE WHICH THE WEST INTENDED TO ADVANCE. ROTH FEELS STRONGLY THAT NUCLEAR ELEMENT WILL IN THE END PLAY MAJOR ROLE IN DETERMINING SOVIET READINESS TO ACCEPT WESTERN DEMANDS. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT IN THE GERMAN VIEW TO EXAMINE CAREFULLY THIS "NUCLEAR INSTRUMENT"; IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR ALLIED EXPERTS TO CONSIDER TACNUC REQUIREMENTS OF WESTERN DEFENSE. AS WE INDICATED IN REF A, FRG FOREIGN OFFICE AND DEFENSE MINISTRY EXPERTS PRESENTLY ARE SEEKING TO DEVELOP ANALYSIS AND TALKING POINTS FOR USE IN POSSIBLE CONVERSATION WITH US AND UK EXPERTS IN JANUARY. IN ROTH'S VIEW, WESTERN MIXED PACKAGE PROPOSAL SHOULD FOCUS ON TACNUC/TANK TRADE OFF RATHER THAN MEANS OF DELIVERY.

6. STATIONED/INDIGENOUS ISSUE

WEISS NOTED THAT US HAD DONE ITS BEST TO MEET FRG INTEREST IN INCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS FORCES IN MBFR REDUCTION PROCESS. HAVING JUST COME FROM OTHER ALLIED CAPITALS, WEISS VOICED THE VIEW THAT SOVIET DEMANDS IN VIENNA FOR REDUCTIONS IN BUNDESWEHR WERE DESIGNED ABOVE ALL TO FEED DIVISIVENESS IN ALLIANCE ON THIS SUBJECT. SOVIETS WERE FOCUSING ON POLITICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY IMPLICATIONS, AS THEY DID ALSO IN SALT WITH FBS ISSUE. WEISS HOPED ROTH WOULD TAKE THESE CONSIDERATIONS INTO ACCOUNT ALONG WITH KNOWN GERMAN DOMESTIC PRESSURES. ROTH SAID HE WAS CONSCIOUS OF SOVIET INTENTIONS, WHICH BONN WOULD FULLY CONSIDER. ON THE OTHER HAND, POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES WITHIN GERMANY WOULD HAVE TO BE CONTAINED;

DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER FELT STRONGLY ABOUT THE SUBJECT
AND WAS CORRECT. ROTH SAID THE BUNDESWEHR COULD BE IN
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A "QUITE CRITICAL SITUATION" A DECADE FROM NOW UNLESS
ACTIONS WERE TAKEN TO IMPROVE
THE PROPORTION OF THE DEFENSE BUDGET GOING TO INVESTMENT
AND EQUIPMENT AS OPPOSED TO PERSONNEL COSTS. HE SAID
PERCENTAGE OF DEFENSE BUDGET GOING TO INVESTMENT
CONTINUED TO DETERIORATE WHILE EFFORTS WERE MADE TO
CAMOUFLAGE THE SITUATION. THIS MEANT THAT BUNDESWEHR
CAPABILITY AND QUALITY SUFFERED. THERE IS A SERIOUS
DEBATE WITHIN THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AS TO WHETHER
BUNDESWEHR FORCE STRUCTURE CHANGES SHOULD BE LINKED TO
MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. ROTH OPPOSES SUCH A LINKAGE, WHILE
ACKNOWLEDGING THAT MBFR PROCESS MUST GENUFLECT
VISIBLY IN THE DIRECTION OF SOME INDIGENOUS REDUCTIONS
IN ORDER TO CURB DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE. COMMENT:
AS ROTH INDICATED, DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIALS, PARTI-
CULARLY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WIECK, FAVOR SUCH A CONNEC-
TION. WIECK EXCHANGE WITH WEISS ON THIS TOPIC BEING
COVERED BY SEPTTEL. END COMMENT.

7. TANKS

REPLYING TO QUESTION FROM WEISS, ROTH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT
SOME ALLIED DEFENSE EXPERTS HAVE DRAWN LESSON FROM
RECENT MID-EAST WAR THAT ROLE OF TANK IS LESS IM-
PORTANT THAN PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED. NOTING DIFFERENCES OF

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LIMDIS

TERRAIN ETC. BETWEEN SINAI DESERT AND NORTH/CENTRAL
EUROPE, ROTH EXPRESSED HESITATION ABOUT REDUCING
PRIORITY ALLIES ATTACH TO REDUCTIONS IN SOVIET TANKS.
HE EMPHASIZED BOTH MILITARY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE
OF OVERWHELMING SOVIET TANK ADVANTAGE NEAR GERMAN
DEMARCATION LINE AND SAID PROGRESS IN REDUCING THIS
THREAT SHOULD BE IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE.

8. TIMING

ROTH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT "WE ARE RUNNING AGAINST MANS-
FIELD'S CLOCK", BUT ALSO CAUTIONED THAT IT WOULD BE
SERIOUS MISTAKE TO CONDUCT IMPORTANT NEGOTIATIONS TOO
SWIFTLY. ROTH'S MAIN CONCERN HERE WAS POSSIBLE DAMAGE
TO ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. SPEAKING FRANKLY, HE SAID:
"USG HAS ALTERNATIVES TO MBFR; WE DO NOT." HE TERMED
MBFR ONE INSTRUMENT IN THE BROADER US/EUROPEAN RELATION-
SHIP BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. WHILE BONN WOULD
PREFER TO LAY EMPHASIS ON ARRANGEMENTS TO CONTROL USES
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OF SOVIET FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE, FRG WOULD COOPERATE
FULLY WITH US ON ACHIEVING REDUCTION AGREEMENT IN ORDER
TO SATISFY CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES. BUT ROTH ENDED WITH
PLEA THAT NEGOTIATIONS NOT BE RUSHED IN A WAY TO
JEOPARDIZE OVERALL ALLIANCE COHESION AS THAT RESULT
WOULD FULFILL PRINCIPAL SOVIET OBJECTIVE IN MBFR
NEGOTIATIONS.
HILLENBRAND

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